

## **Transit Commission Meeting Minutes**

### **May 26, 2015**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Charles Poole. Other Commissioners in attendance included Lori Contreras and Dustin Perceful. Commissioner Treopia Jordan was absent. Transit staff in attendance included Ken Savage, Sue Ruth, Nancy Kain, Lori Carr and Mike Irwin. The public audience in attendance was Barbara Houston-Blatchford, Pauline Novak, Keley Simpson, Sandy Readinger, Andre Good and Marilyn Kissinger.

Staff and Commissioners welcomed Lori Contreras to the Commission.

#### **1. Minutes of the February 19, 2015 Meeting**

Commissioner Perceful made the motion to approve the minutes and Commissioner Contreras seconded. Roll call resulted in three members in favor and zero opposed. The minutes were unanimously approved.

#### **2. Discuss Saturday Service on the Zero Street Route**

This item involved a discussion regarding the addition of Saturday service to the Zero Street fixed route. Director Savage said that currently all other fixed routes operate on Saturdays from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Extending Saturday service on the Zero Street route would permit passengers the ability to utilize fixed route services to and from the waterpark, as well as other destinations along the route.

Director Savage said the Zero Street route was placed into service in January 2015 from resources previously attributed to night time demand response service. Night service was discontinued during the same time frame due to low utilization. The Zero Street route has surpassed night service utilization significantly. The change occurred following 2014 survey results which indicated a much greater interest in the fixed route as compared to night service utilization.

Director Savage said when altering the previous night service to the current fixed route service staff was conservative with the resources available and omitted Saturdays. Resources have not improved however staff would like to discuss the concept of Saturday service with the Commission to determine service level interest.

Currently the fixed routes average 31.19% more trips during the week then on weekends. Staff is asking for direction concerning the desire to operate on all Saturdays throughout the year or only those Saturdays in conjunction with the waterpark season if the Commission approves. What staff recommends is to use the demand response service for water park access on

Saturdays. Staff also recommends charging the \$1.25 fixed route rate for demand response service to the water park on Saturdays throughout the summer season.

Commission Perceful asked why we would run the demand response service at the fixed route rate of \$1.25. Director Savage replied, this will allow us to gauge the interest of our passengers at the fixed route rate before implementing a full day of fixed route service, but only on Saturdays.

Chairman Poole thought the \$1.25 cost would allow the service to be overwhelmed with too many passengers taking advantage.

Ms. Novak stated the park is open from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and kids will not be ready to leave the park after 30 minutes. She then asked what time would the Saturday service run. Director Savage explained the hours of service, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. for the demand response and 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for the fixed route.

Ms. Houston-Blatchford stated the water park is only open until Labor Day.

Director Contreras stated a time limit should be set when making their schedule.

Director Savage explained how during the week while using the fixed route some would have to leave the park in the 3:00 hour to be able to hit the transfers on time since the last transfer is in the 5:00 hour. This would be required for passengers travelling to the extreme ends of the route. Staff will coordinate return trips with individuals to ensure the passengers make it home.

Ms. Houston-Blatchford asked how staff would let people know of the reduced rate. Staff replied, that notifications will be through the transit newsletter, website, dispatchers, the transit information line, beta brites on the buses and the media.

It was decided to honor monthly passes for Saturday demand response service to and from the water park.

Commission Perceful made the motion to provide demand response service on Saturdays for \$1.25 for water park passengers and honor monthly passes as well. Commissioner Contreras seconded the motion. Roll call resulted in three members in favor and zero opposed. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **3. Discuss City Department Rate Adjustment for Charter Services**

Staff proposed adjustments to the city department rates for charter services. Director Savage said public charter rates were revised in January 2014, however no adjustments were made to the city department rates at that time. The Federal Transit Administration will not participate in charter expense of any kind, therefore 100% of the associated costs have to be compensated through rates (internal and external). Director Savage said in 2014, revenues from

public charter collections supplemented department charters. The transit department has been fortunate to cover expense differences in past department charters, however, staff feels it is necessary to adjust the rates to ensure federal grant compliance.

Staff is proposing a 2016 rate of \$95 for the first hour and \$70 for each additional hour of operation for department charters, an increase of \$10 per hour. Rates pertaining to city department charters were last revised in 2010. Personnel and operating expenses have increased since 2010, which have impacted the total cost of operations. Transit drivers were adjusted from a grade 3 to a grade 4 during this period and the operation of the transfer station are two examples of changes since 2010.

Commission Perceful made the motion to increase the rates to \$95 for the first hour and \$70 for the additional hours for the city department charters effective January 2016 and Commissioner Contreras seconded. Roll call resulted in three members in favor and zero opposed. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### **4. Other Business**

None

#### **5. Commissioners Forum**

None

#### **6. Citizens Forum**

Ms. Novak took a considerable amount of time to express her thoughts that kids should get to ride for free to and from the water park. Ms. Novak then stated the drivers are impolite to the passengers, they run the air conditioning too cold and they want to argue with the passengers. Chairman Poole informed Ms. Novak that her comments were noted.

Ms. Keley Simpson introduced herself as the Community Liaison with First Presbyterian Community Church. She was interested in the shelters and wanted to know if we could place more of them and how do we decide where to place them.

Director Savage explained that we had used ARRA funding to provide roughly 30 shelters for Fort Smith. There are a lot of limitations regarding where we can place them. We must have property owner's permission and there are a lot of rules regarding placing them on highways. We also currently have a bench program with Creative Outdoor Advertising.

Commission Perceful said he hears a lot about it at the library regarding Rogers Avenue, but Rogers Avenue is actually Highway 64 and there are a lot of regulations regarding highway right of way.

Direct Savage explained how staff has been working with First Presbyterian Church of Fort Smith regarding their interest to potentially provide some funding assistance to acquire more amenities for Fort Smith.

After some discussion, the Commission decided on Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, as their next quarterly meeting.

With no further business, Chairman Poole adjourned the meeting.